Iowa Department of Administrative Services

Government's Partner in Achieving Results

DAS

Governor Terry E. Branstad
Lt. Governor Kim Reynolds

Mike Carroll, Director

Concept Paper # 237

Name of document to be reviewed:
Livehelper software for Live Chat Service on Iowa.gov webpage

(Please check one item listed in the following two sections)

Document for review and approval:

__ **Request for Proposal (RFP)**	__ **Sole Source Procurement**
__ **Request for Service (RFS)**	_X_ **Statement of Work**
__ **Request for Quote (RFQ)**	__ **Staff Augmentation**
__ **Invitation to Qualify**	__ **Master Agreement Purchase**

NOTE: Sole source procurements will also need authorization from DAS-ITE Procurement for this type of purchase. Please also contact DAS-ITE Procurement at this location: http://DAS-ITE.gse.iowa.gov/procurement/solesource%202010.pdf

Document for review only:

__ **Master Agreement**	__ **Request for Information (RFI)**

Agency: State Library of Iowa

RFP Reference #:

Release Date:

This project is requesting IOWAccess funds: Yes _X__   No ___

NOTE: IOWAccess concept papers are to be sent to Wes Hunsberger (Wes.Hunsberger@iowa.gov) for an internal DAS-ITE review.

Projected cost over $50,000?   Yes ___   No _X__

Projected agency staff hours over 750?   Yes ___   No _X__

Project Cost, Funds and Funding Source:

Please list the internal and external resources/costs for the purchase:

Internal Resources/Costs: The State Library of Iowa staffs this service for the Iowa.gov website at no charge to DAS-ITE or Iowa Interactive. The internal cost to the State Library is estimated to have been $6175 for the last fiscal year. 1235 questions answered, average of 10 minutes spent per question, average salary costs $30/hour. We did not include overhead, training, or benefit costs in this estimate. In addition, there are minor costs to the State Library and Iowa Interactive to maintain and install upgrades to the software.

External Resources/Costs: Debbie O'Leary (DAS-ITE) suggests that we request five years funding for software needed to run the live chat service on the Iowa.gov website. Estimated cost is $2,039.40 for the Livehelper software that is currently in use. An invoice from Cybercon for the software for $407.88, which the State Library is requesting reimbursement for, is attached.

The Livehelper software has proven itself to be the correct application for this job. It works well, at a reasonable cost, for the type of service that is provided.

Timelines: This service began in June of 2009 as a joint project between DAS-ITE, Iowa Interactive and the State Library of Iowa. DAS-ITE has funded the annual cost of the Livehelper software, Iowa Interactive has maintained the link to the service on Iowa.gov and the State Library has staffed the service with information professionals since that time.

Goal: The goal is to be a portal between state agency customers and Iowa state government services, both traditional and e-services, and to provide this service in the most efficient and effective way. The Live Support link on Iowa.gov will provide live chat help to customers to navigate state agencies' websites. The service will also allow not only ITE staff, but staff in many other agencies, to devote their time to their primary duties rather than to answering reference queries.

Background: In 2009 when Malcolm Huston (DAS-ITE) was working with Iowa Interactive to update Iowa.gov, he investigated live chat assistance for the website. At that time a number of state websites offered the service and Malcolm thought it would be a good addition to Iowa.gov. Also, the Helpdesk at DAS-ITE was receiving a wide variety of reference questions through the webmaster account that they did not have the time or training to answer. This was because the webmaster was the only "contact information" available on the Iowa.gov pages. Malcolm asked the State Library if we would be willing to staff a live chat reference service for the Iowa.gov website and we agreed. Since 2009 the State Library has paid the Cybercon invoice and Malcolm has facilitated the reimbursement.

In 2013 many state websites offer this service. Governor Branstad would like to have Iowa.gov win the "Best of the Web" award, and this would probably not be possible without a live chat reference service.

Expected Results:

What are the tangible and intangible benefits of this purchase for this agency and/or state government? The Live Support link on Iowa.gov benefits Iowa state agencies by providing answers to their customers who have difficulty navigating the agencies' websites. It allows state employees to concentrate on their primary duties by answering general reference questions and by assisting their customers in finding the correct contact within state government. And it benefits DAS-ITE by answering

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questions that would instead come to the DAS-ITE webmaster. The State Library provides this service at no charge to Iowa Interactive or to DAS-ITE.

In FY12 State Library reference staff answered 1,289 questions through Live Support, and in FY13 the service is on course to top that. Most of the questions come from individuals and businesses as they attempt to navigate through the intricate layers of government.

State government questions top the list, followed by questions related to Iowa's city, county, and federal governments. Many in the general public are not experienced web users and have trouble finding what they are looking for on state agency websites.

Commonly asked questions from businesses include: "How do I start/register a business/check to see if a business is registered in Iowa?"; "How do I do business with the state of Iowa/become a vendor to the state of Iowa/check on bids for state contracts?"; "How do I get a tax id number for my business?"

Commonly asked questions from individuals include: "How do I get a copy of my marriage/divorce/or birth certificate?"; "How do I check on a tax refund/get a tax form/pay a ticket online?"; "How do I get my unemployment benefits/find a job/become licensed for a job?"; "How can I get help to pay my rent/utilities/food assistance/medical bills?"

Live Support also receives a good number of general questions about Iowa, especially from k-12 age kids, ranging from the easy, "What is the state bird/tree, etc.", to more in depth questions about famous Iowans, places and events in Iowa, and historical questions about past governors, native Americans, and demographics.

Can these benefits be quantified in financial terms? If yes, please explain.   Tangible financial benefits could be calculated if one were to evaluate the savings to staff time for the various state agencies which benefit from the service and also the savings to the public's time as they receive help in navigating state agencies' websites. State Library reference staff answer these types of questions routinely and are experts in navigating state agency websites.

How will you be more effective as a result of this purchase? Iowa.gov is a much more effective tool for Iowans and others to navigate state agency websites and use state services by having the Live Support service available to its customers.

How will service to your customers be enhanced as a result of this purchase? Customers of Iowa.gov who use Live Support frequently respond to the service with accolades. Many arrive to Live Support frustrated that they have not been able to find what they are looking for. Many have dificultly navigating state agency websites or finding the information that they need. It's clear that some would have given up if they had not had the ability to use Live Support to answer their questions.

<u>**Testing and Acceptance:**</u>

<u>**Some of the Interested Parties**</u>:   DAS-ITE, Iowa Interactive, State Library of Iowa, Governor Branstad, anyone needing information about or services from Iowa agencies.

<u>**Some of the Recipients of this Service:**</u> State agencies, Iowans, national and international customers.

Standards:

Architecture:

Business Continuity / Disaster Recovery:

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Recommendations from the State CIO:

NOTE: *Where applicable, all DAS-ITE GSE Procurement and IA Administrative Code 11-105 and 11-106 requirements and procedures are to be followed. Reference: http://DAS-ITE.gse.iowa.gov/procurement/, specifically: http://DAS-ITE.gse.iowa.gov/procurement/adminrules/.*

Duplication recommendation from the State CIO to the DAS-ITE Director:

a) Is there duplication within Government? *(Please identify duplication at the agency level, as well as within the enterprise)*
b) Can an existing program be modified to address a new need?
c) Do you have any similar program in existence?
d) Have you sought IT procurements for similar programs in the past?
e) Do you have purchasing documents for similar programs?
f) Do you have similar purchasing documents that could be used as a starting point for this program?
g) Is there anything you could provide that could assist the agency with this IT procurement?
h) Are there alternatives available to the agencies?

Recommendation of the State CIO to the DAS-ITE Director:

Authorize this IT procurement   Yes _X_   No ___
Alternatives suggested by the State CIO
    (see comments below)   Yes ___   No _X_

Additional comments from the State CIO:

The State CIO recommends funding of $2,040 for this IOWAccess funding request.

DAS-ITE Director's action (or DAS-ITE COO action):
Authorize this IT procurement   Yes _X_   No ___

DAS-ITE Director's signature and date:

> **The Director's approval was not required for this funding request, as the request was under $50,000 in value.**

DAS-ITE COO's signature and date:

> **Matt Behrens approved the funding request on 2/8/13.**